DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 357 427 EA 024 819

AUTHOR Trenta, Louis S., Jr.
TITLE The Application of W. Edwards Deming's Principles to the Akron City School District: A Journal of the First Year.
PUB DATE [92]
NOTE 24p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Role; *Decision Making; *Educational Change; Educational Policy; Elementary Secondary Education; *School Based Management; School Restructuring; Teacher Administrator Relationship
IDENTIFIERS *Akron Public Schools OH; *Deming Management Method; Total Quality Management

ABSTRACT

The author kept a journal during the year he worked to establish a Division of Accountability for the Akron, Ohio, public schools system. Trenta had been the chief personnel officer for the school system with supervisory responsibility for the Department of Research and Evaluation. This journal begins in October 1991. At the time, the school district was undergoing a major reorganization. The reorganization involved increasing site-based decision making by teachers and principals. However, Trenta saw that the principles of site-based management and enlargement of the central-district office conflicted. Trenta used the 14 points of W. Edwards Deming as the means to blend the basic principles of effective schools, site-based management, and participative management. The journal continues with periodic entries chronicling how teachers and administrators in the Akron school system participated in a Xerox Corporation quality training program using Total Quality Management techniques. Trenta's account of the process Akron Public Schools went through in its reorganization continues until late June 1992 when he left to head Cleveland-area Catholic schools. (JPT)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
L. Trenta
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ED357427

THE APPLICATION OF W. EDWARDS DEMING'S PRINCIPLES TO THE AKRON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT: A JOURNAL OF THE FIRST YEAR

by

Louis S. Trenta, Jr.

OCTOBER 19, 1991

In July 1991, I accepted the assignment to create a Division of Accountability for the Akron Public Schools. At the time the district was undergoing a dramatic reorganization and downsizing of the central office. For the five previous years I had been the chief personnel officer for the district with supervisory responsibility for the Department of Research and Evaluation--a four person operation. The director who oversaw the department and administered the testing program for the system was assisted by a statistical secretary and, for the last year, two people who handled evaluations for special funded programs.

The reorganization called for seven administrators and appropriate office support staff. For good measure, the data processing department was assigned to the new division with directions to upgrade it, also.

During July and the first part of August, I was involved in negotiations with the local teachers' association. A tentative agreement was worked out in mid-August with the superintendent heavily involved during the final three weeks of negotiations. A key feature of the new contract was the insertion of a section which allowed for the creation of building leadership teams. These teams were the superintendent's means of obtaining participative decision making at the building level. He was committed to site-based decision making and, wherever possible, sought to have it shared between teachers and principals.

The emphasis on site based and participative management did not seem to square with the enlargement of a central office accountability program, so I cast about for a format that could blend the principles involved in those two concepts with another of the superintendent's major thrusts, Effective Schools Research. In early August I read Andrea Gabor's book, *The Man Who Discovered Quality*, which the Superintendent had been flashing at me since June. I then read the American Association of School Administrators' (AASA) flyer on Total Quality Schooling Initiative.

The fourteen points of W. Edwards Deming seemed to provide a philosophical foundation or parent source for the basic principles of Effective Schools, site based management, and participative management. Consequently, the system joined the AASA network and ordered all the materials offered.

Also in early August, the Xerox Corporation delivered on a commitment made to the Superintendent and took twenty of the senior staff members through the company's new employee training program, *Leadership Through Quality*. This program is based in large part on the fourteen points of Deming. When the training was over, the Superintendent announced that he expected each of those who received the training to utilize it in identifying and resolving from one to three problems during the upcoming school year. Each was also to let him know how the training was being passed on within the system. Those whom he evaluated would have monthly touch base meetings to let him know of progress.

EA024819

After a quick reading of the materials in the AASA publication *An Introduction to Total Quality for Schools* the Superintendent added it to the mix in our restructuring effort. Thus there are four main prongs: Effective Schools Research, Site Based Management, Participative Management, and the management principles of Deming.

About the same time, a professor from the University of Akron, Dr. Isadore Newman, told me he had taught Deming's statistical methods to employees at a local Ford plant and offered to help the Akron Schools introduce the ideas. A quick flyer was sent out to approximately 175 administrators inviting them to an informational presentation. Over 70 administrators came to hear Dr. Neuman give an hour long presentation about Deming's fourteen points and some of the statistical analyses used by Deming.

The AASA booklet was passed around among senior staff members; and when the eight Deming videotapes arrived, the senior staff watched them together. The Superintendent, in numerous internal and external forums, publicly committed himself and the central office staff to implement all the restructuring prongs.

As we prepared to train the principals in the Xerox problem solving and quality improvement methods, the Xerox Corporation again provided the chief trainer in their Cleveland office to do the training.

I had sought to attend a Deming seminar and an AASA sponsored follow-up policy seminar but was shut out due to late registration. I arranged for one of the administrators in the Division to attend an AASA sponsored workshop on implementing Deming's principles in the school setting and have registered for a Deming workshop plus a follow up educators' seminar with Deming.

In the mean time, the Superintendent has hired a consultant to train administrators and teachers in the Effective Schools Research. Members of Building Leadership Teams are receiving an introductory overview in September through November. At the same time a team of twenty-four people is being trained in Instructional Alignment. These people are scheduled to work with the consultant to train over two hundred teachers and principals in that process.

In reaching out for advice and ideas about the implementation of Deming's principles, I contacted the head of quality control at GenCorp in Akron, Dana Cound. He put me in touch with the American Society for Quality Control which in turn put me in touch with the chairman of the division for service industries, Skip Johnson. In early October these two men have been supportive of the direction and both have expressed willingness to help with the process as they can. Neither has pressured us to go in a particular direction other than Skip's strong urging that I start this journal.

Both Dana and Skip counseled me not to lose sight of common sense indicating that while Deming is the dominate figure in the Total Quality Management field there are other people and other ideas.

As of the end of October, one of my colleagues, Dr. Ellen Goggins, and I will each facilitate a group of principals in studying the Deming philosophy. We will be using the Deming videotapes and discussion guides. At the same time we intend to advertise this beginning and invite others to join us or start their own groups.

In senior staff on October 18, 1991, a point of conflict with traditional perceptions was raised. A discussion was underway about having the same standards for grades for all

grade levels across all schools in the system. The point was made that Deming would not have grades for students. His point would be that the system was more appropriately graded than the students. The students were accomplishing only that which the system operated to allow.

Another debate that is going on relates to recognition. I made a proposal to give some recognition to those who step out of their traditional roles and address a problem or situation that is not typically their responsibility. The question raised was, does that type of recognition destroys intrinsic motivation?

We have not settled either issue at this time.

OCTOBER 27, 1991

In this week a Xerox representative told Terry Grier that APS was being talked about in high level corporate conversations. Feedback like that is encouraging. The rep also told Terry that he and I ought to be writing a book as we go along. We are perceived as working at something worthwhile in big city school systems.

Terry has been using the term "profound knowledge" as referring to the professional learning as in Effective Schools research. On Thursday, October 25, 1991 Terry invited me to sit in on a conversation with a friend of his, Kent Peterson, a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and formerly of Vanderbilt University. We discussed the problems of bringing about change. During the conversation Terry again referred to Effective Schools research as part of the profound knowledge referred to by Deming. I disagreed and talked about Deming's concept of profound knowledge as relating to knowledge common to all enterprises, such as knowledge of statistics (variation), knowledge of human psychology, and two others that I couldn't remember at the time. Deming has said that he isn't and doesn't have to be the expert in the enterprise with which he works. The people in the enterprise are the experts on the enterprise, he provides help with bringing quality to the enterprise. The knowledge of the people is vital to the success of the enterprise.

T[illegible]evening at a meeting of the Pre-Cana group [a marriage preparation program for engaged couples at my parish church] , we had a talk on conscious formation. In that talk the speaker described conscious as having three levels. As he talked I saw basic parallels with our work in the system with the development of teachers as ethical professionals. Level one is a state of being. This level is the teacher as a professional person; it is the knowledge and experiences that have shaped him or her to this point in his or her career. Level two is the process level. At this level the professional person considers thoroughly two knowledge bases as he/she strives to be in a position to make the best possible decision. The two knowledge bases are (1) the individual situation in the classroom, the school building, the school community and (2) the available knowledge about teaching/learning, the state of the art/science of education, as it is at the present time. Level three is the level of action. The professional person--having considered what he/she is as a professional, the state of the unique situation in which action must occur, and the state of the profession's art--decides and acts.

In our situation I think we are working to emphasize the second level of the ethical teacher. Rather than formula solutions being imposed, we are emphasizing the need for the uniqueness of each situation to be considered by the persons acting in the situation. Additionally, we seek to increase the awareness of the state of knowledge concerning the art of teaching/learning. Tools being taught by Toni Moynihan-McCoy of the Effective Schools Institute offer ways to more closely examine the unique situations each is in and the

Effective Schools research offers an up-to-date look at the state of research on teaching and learning.

In a sense, the training of Building Leadership Teams (BLT) addresses the enterprise-expertise part of quality improvement. We must find ways to inculcate the areas of profound knowledge defined by Deming and commitment to the Fourteen Points so that the enterprise-expertise can be used to improve the system. They need each other. Just as Deming did not create a system to manufacture cars, rather he helped improve the system already existing, so too, must we have a system for the generation of learning upon which the principles of Deming can operate.

Keith Peterson also recommended the book, *Corporate Negaholic: How to Deal Successfully with Negative Colleagues, Managers, and Corporations* by Cherie Carter-Scott. I read it and found it focusing, as its title promised, on the negative. Nearly every one of the negative types was traced back to dysfunctional family life by the author and all solutions revolved around confronting the negative behavior often with her wondrous help.

I don't think the book is of much help in our dealing with the high level of negative feeling existing in the system at present. I think we are aware that much of what exists in terms of negative feelings is due to people acting out of a desire to protect themselves or to preserve the status quo rather than to fulfill the redined/revitalized mission of the system. To reduce it we either help them find that they can be successful (even more successful) in the new way of operating or we stop changing. Since stopping is not possible, we must find ways and time to help people be and feel successful.

A major happening of the week was the acceptance by Bill Siegferth, the union president, of Terry's invitation to attend the Deming Seminar on Friday. When he finally accepted, he called back and asked for a spot for Neil Quirk, the vice-president, also. As Terry described the conversation that lead to Bill's acceptance, a key factor seemed to be Terry's willingness to change. Bill pointed out that some of Deming's thoughts did not coincide with other directions and initiatives we have underway. Terry told Bill we knew that and were struggling to be sure we understood the full meaning of Deming's points and that if there were ways to improve that called for change in what we were doing or advocating, he was not opposed to changing his mind.

NOVEMBER 28, 1991

A great deal has happened in the past month. Twelve Akron Public School employees attended the one day Deming seminar. Five Deming study groups were formed and began to meet. The Superintendent obtained the right for Akron Public Schools to be a downlink site for a live transmission of Deming conducting a four day seminar in Scottsdale, AZ.

The one day Deming seminar seemed to have been a good consciousness rising activity. Akron send twelve people including the President and Vice-president of the teachers' union. The Superintendent led the Akron administrators' contingent. The union officers evidently went on their own and stayed in the back of the room. I did not go because I knew I would be going to a two day Deming seminar in January and I wanted as many people from my division as possible to go. The three coordinators went and two of them came back very enthusiastic. The third was non-committal (I later found out that he was si' ntly trying to do his old job and his new job by working extended hours nearly everyday).

I asked one of the coordinators to set up a meeting for those who went to discuss their impressions and to see if they were interested in forming a study/action group. It took

nearly a month to hold the meeting. When we did finally met, five of those who went attended, the three coordinators from my division, the Director of Child Nutrition, and the Executive Assistant for Personnel Services. The union officials did not attend. The meeting was in the week before Thanksgiving when a number of the other administrators were taking vacation days. My non-committal coordinator was the only one who did not seem enthusiastic about the seminar or staying involved in promoting and studying application of Deming's principles. However, even he, when given the opportunity to drop out or speak out, sought to stay involved. We agreed to meet again after the four day Deming workshop to discuss whether we form a cross departmental study group, a cross departmental problem solving group, or an activist group promoting study and implementation of the fourteen principles.

Dr. Goggins and I began our small study groups. We had divided those who had expressed interest into two groups of about nine people based on their preferred time to meet. The groups were primarily principals with a few assistant principals and one or two central office administrators. When we sent the notice of the meeting time, we sent copies to all administrators and invited them to call in if they wanted to participate in forming additional groups. I don't know if that was a mistake or brilliant. I facilitated the first meeting and had fourteen people show up on a Monday afternoon. Five people had evidently taken the notice as an invitation to attend that particular meeting. Needless to say, we did not turn any away. Also, enough people registered to require starting three additional study groups. The Director of Long Range Planning and two coordinators from my division are each going to facilitate one group. The new Director of Information Services will shadow one group in preparation for taking on the next group to get formed.

At the first meeting of my study group, I handed out a copy of the study guide with all the directions and questions to try and reduce the "classroom" atmosphere. I also handed out some additional readings that had just come to me (Later the same readings were sent to all principals and BLT members). I emphasized that we would talk about what those present wanted to; the prepared discussion questions were to be prompts, if we needed them. We began with the two tapes on the Red Bead experiment. The tapes lasted about fifty-five minutes and the discussion went on for about a half hour after each tape. At first, I did a lot of talking and reflecting, exposing my thoughts and fears on the topic, but gradually others began to talk up. At the end of the time, as the group was breaking up, one of the group asked about continuing the study group and the majority of the group said they wanted to continue the following Monday.

At the second meeting about nine people showed up. Again I had some new handouts along with the discussion guide for the videotape on the Fourteen Points. We watched the presentation on the first three points, pausing after each one and discussing it. The discussion on the three points took over an hour and a half. Again I felt as if I was doing a lot of the talking at first but by the end no one individual seemed to be carrying the discussion. We used only a few of the discussion guide questions as the principals made many references to what was going on in the district and relating it to Deming's principles. I did speak at length about consistency of purpose and tried to help them see that Dr. Grier has not shifted from the course he first set in April when he arrived. I also shared some of the ideas I had about the three levels of professional action involved in educators making decisions about teaching. That seemed to help several of the principals put things into a fuller perspective--they seemed to take a step back and look at the "forest". Again, the members of the group brought up scheduling the next meeting; so we scheduled the next two for the second and third Mondays following that date.

At the third meeting about twelve people were present. I had no additional hand outs at that time, but I did tell them about the four day Deming seminar scheduled for December 3-6,

1991. I took some time explaining what it was and why they were expected to come instead of invited. We talked a little about middle management's role in bringing about change and how all the parts could or would fit together. We then watched the videotape for the fourth through the seventh points with a discussion after each of the points. These discussions were much more free flowing that the previous ones. I believe I only prompted the start of each discussion and called attention to only one of the prepared discussion questions. Much of the time I sat and listened.

At the end of the meeting, we decided not to hold the next session since it was scheduled on the day before we began the four day seminar. We agreed to meet toward the end of the fourth day to decide when to meet again and for what purpose.

One of the principals stayed behind to tell me about some of his prior learning experiences in business and how the "quality" aspects of that part of his career were coming back to him and giving him a perspective and understanding of what was now going in the system. Since he seemed interested and I had a couple of extra invitations, I invited him to attend a luncheon sponsored by IBM at which the head of their "Quality" program was to speak. We drove up together along with Dr. Goggins and had a lively discussion on the way. I felt the most productive part was talking about the larger picture which he was able to relate to what he wanted to happen in his building. He was reassured that Grier meant it when he said decisions appropriate for the school to make would be left in the school. He was particularly interested in year-round school on a 45/15 schedule. I told him that if his staff could do it with the same resources they now get, they'd almost certainly get permission.

The luncheon speaker was refreshing in that he did not try to come across as having all the answers. He expressed many of the same problems we sense are in our future. I got a sense of a need to work together and at the same time a reinforcement of the idea that no one approach (e.g. Deming) is likely to be the one, true answer. He allowed as how IBM's quality movement of the early '80's was flawed, but he expressed a strong conviction that market driven or customer driven quality was essential to America's economic survival.

From one of the questioners, I learned that the CEO of Florida Power and Light had been fired or replaced shortly after the company won the Deming Prize. Evidently his board of directors felt the company had become one whose product was quality and not a quality product or service. Another company was cited to have done the same thing to its CEO after his company won recognition for its quality program.

No wonder so many people are counseling me to use common sense and not get totally tied up in just Deming's concepts.

The same day as the IBM luncheon, Ellen Goggins met with her study group. She had mentioned it to Dr. Neuman of the University of Akron and he asked to attend. I talked to both after the session. Dr. Newman was very complementary about the interest show and the depth of the discussions. He thought we had a good process going that could have some impact. He also asked about attending the four day Deming workshop which APS is scheduled to host in December. He was given a slot.

The chance for APS to host the workshop came about in the following manner. In early November, shortly after attending the Deming seminar, Grier called Deming's office and tried to get him to come to Akron. His secretary told him no but directed him to the company that was going to be handling a satellite transmission of a four day seminar. Grier called that company and got them to let Akron be a satellite downlink site. We celebrated and then set about finding a place to hold us and the money to pay for it. We tried the University of

Akron but were shut out when a previously scheduled event could not be moved, so we ended up scheduling it into our Central-Hower High School.

At first we were going to have all attendance be optional; but then Grier reflected on what he had heard from other CEO's in terms of middle management being the toughest people to get to buy in. So he decided that all our principals would be directed to come--no choice--and we would open other slots up for teachers and administrators. Unfortunately, we could not secure funding for substitute teachers so only a few teachers could come. But they expressed more interest and it looks good, if and when we can find funding or other ways to train them.

As might be expected, several principals did not like being told they had to come. Several were told to cancel trips to out of town meetings. One executive assistant was also asked to change her plans and did so. One principal wrote an anonymous letter to a Board member protesting being forced to attend. Both I and Grier told more than one audience about the stories and advice from other leaders about middle management and the need to make them participate in the early training. In any event, Grier held fast and got at least silent acknowledgement of his position.

Part of the seminar includes getting a copy of Deming's book, *Out of the Crisis*. When they came in, we immediately sent them out to the principals and then to the other people accepted into the seminar. I think that sparked a little more enthusiasm. At least it brought some calls from those not getting the books and acceptance into the training. One principal called and complained about her assistant principal not getting accepted (central office administrators had gotten the notice before the field administrators and Grier believed it important to keep some coverage in the buildings by keeping the assistant principals there).

Four or five teachers had applied despite the notice that no funds were available for substitutes. I guess they hoped that somehow they would get in and substitutes would be provided. Consequently, there was some reshuffling just before the meeting. One principal was running into roadblocks trying to use some of her building funds to pay for a substitute for one of her teachers. I told her to go ahead get the substitute and worry later about getting all the paperwork covered. It looks like about fifteen teachers will be there including the Vice-president of the union and four members of the union's negotiating team.

When I was talking to Ed Blount of Xerox, who agreed to be our site facilitator (required by the Deming group), I learned that he was beginning a Xerox new employee training session with eight or nine leaders of the teachers' union. He told me that he would need to talk with Terry and me about getting together with the two top officers of the teachers' union and him to talk about his and Xerox's role in this "quality" effort. I read him to mean he had some serious concerns about the labor-management relationship. He mentioned that the union leaders had spent a lot of time talking about how Grier was doing things. I told him we'd be able to talk during the Deming seminar. I also briefed Grier on the conversation.

DECEMBER 6, 1991

We have just completed the four day Deming seminar.

The principals were required to attend but the other sixty-three people asked to attend. The mix may have been beneficial for us. The principals as a group projected a slight sense of resentment or tenseness on the first day. Adding to our problems was a misunderstanding about the agenda and the activities expected at the end of the day.

We thought, and had advised our participants, that the day's activities would end at 6:00 PM. However, the seminar plan called for discussion group activities at that time. So I explained the misunderstanding and excused any who could not stay. About twenty people stayed and held the discussions.

I participated in one group and found it very worthwhile. I understood some of the misconceptions that were held and was able to try out some explanations and restatements of the Deming vision related to our school setting.

On the morning of the second day, I explained that we would follow the prescribed curriculum with some modification for the rest of the seminar. Due to the misunderstanding, our participants could pair up with one or more people and carry out the discussion at their convenience between 6:00 PM that day and 10:00 AM the next morning. Today, though, we would watch the broadcast of the reporting out from the broadcast site.

We watched the TV group debriefings from the originating site. I had been worried that this would be a bad scene, with people talking and disregarding the program. However, it was watched as attentively as any of Deming's own talks.

At the end of the second day, the group discussion directions were repeated. Principals were also reminded of a previous scheduled principals meeting set for 8:00 AM the next day. All the participants were invited to attend, although only the principals were expected to be there since the meeting was for them. The group was told that the meeting was expected to end early enough that there would be time for discussion groups to complete their activity. About twenty people stayed to do the discussion assignment. Four other groups formed up and turned in response cards before the seminar began again.

The third day began with the 8:00 meeting. Terry handled a number of "shop keeping" type of questions and attended to a couple of rumors. But the majority of the time was spent with him describing the instructional alignment process that he envisioned us undertaking. The discussion carried on until 9:30 and probably would have gone on longer except for my calling attention to the need to allow some discussion groups to finish up.

Our facilitator, Ed Blount from Xerox, and I reviewed the response cards and decided to use all of them even though six were on just two questions. After a slow start with the first question, the discussion got going. All responses were good but probably best was that Ed was the facilitator. That fact seemed to lend additional credence to the process and the message.

At the end of the third day we gave the same instructions for the group discussions. People basically ignored it. Only two cards were turned in; both from the same group. I think the discussions are important and advanced warning would probably have helped get more involvement.

The fourth day, with only two cards, began with a general discussion and responses to questions from the floor. This was highly regarded by Terry and a number of the participants. In fact, we chose to not view the meal time tape from the satellite in order to renew the same activity in the afternoon. The message was being personalized and integrated to our setting.

Nearly everyone remained for the final hour and they applauded Deming when he ended. I would have bet money on the first day that the end of the fourth day would see us missing 25% of the audience and no one would feel impelled to applaud. I'm glad I was wrong.

Some observations and notes from the four days:

I believe the turning point in time was about noon on the third day. Before that some of the participants were with us--principals and others; but it was still with reluctance. By the end I believe that the vast majority are with the program and the reluctant are the exception.

In reviewing the evaluations to be sent to Quality & Productivity, I found no denigration of the concepts and ideas. The main complaint was the uncomfortable chairs. Only two evaluations indicated that shortening the seminar would be recommended.

We provided meals and snacks during the four days. Our Director of Child Nutrition Serves got a number of vendors to donate or reduce price on their products. The result was four different lunches, all good, for a total of less than $5 per person for the entire seminar.

We faxed in questions four times, but had none asked for us. Reviewing the questions, I suspect that they were too naive. Answers were in the materials and the lecture; we needed to believe what we heard.

The confinement probably also helped our district. Keeping 110 of our people close together with a common focus--Deming or hard chairs--allowed them to react to each other in a friendlier, non-threatening way. It built camaraderie.

Terry took a front row seat and was there for nearly all the sessions. His presence said as much as all his talks. These are important concepts and principles for the future of Akron Public Schools.

During this week Barbara Mathews, our Executive Director for School Community Partnerships, got eight different youth serving institutions to commit to sending a top executive to the Deming Seminar sponsored by the AASA in January 1992. The county executive is going as is the head of the Children Services Board and the head of Human Services. She is still working on the Mayor's office and the Juvenile Court judge. This could be a dynamite coalition!

JANUARY 6, 1992

I attended the local Section meeting of the ASQC. The Section chairman told me he had introduced the idea of helping the schools to the Section's Executive Committee and met with a favorable response. He introduced me to Bob Moyer, a member living in Mogadore and working at Smithers Scientific on West Market Street. He indicated an interest in helping as it might help develop Smithers' capabilities in consulting with with school-type organizations.

I attended the technical session which is a training type program scheduled prior to the dinner meeting. It was a presentation on the basic theories of motivation with a few comments added as to how they might fit quality programs. No new insights on the topic, but it was interesting to see the attention paid to it by those in attendance.

Barb Mathews has gotten the Mayor's office to try to participate in the January AASA Deming Seminar. The Mayor will be in Washington on other matters at that time and not able to attend the seminar. However, he indicated a willingness and desire to meet with the group the evening of the 23rd to discuss plans and ideas. Barb is getting strong interest by those going to have Terry Grier there also. I hope he can work it out. I think his presence will be more important than mine.

Grier decided that we needed to get some problem solving teams going. At first it was going to be just for the long range plan. Then he asked me to organize a team to work on the quality problems with the telephone system. He asked me to try and get Ed Blount from Xerox to chair or co-chair the team. I called Ed evidently the day after he and his boss from Xerox headquarters had talked with Grier about Xerox's present and future involvement. Anyway, Ed was very willing to participate and we worked out a co-facilitator arrangement. Ed will provide a one day training session at his training center for APS employees on the problem/quality solving team who have not had the "Leadership Through Quality" training and then meet with the entire team the following week to start the process. In our discussions we talked about having a mix of problem solving and quality improvement approaches used on this situation.

FEBRUARY 3, 1992

A fast moving month!

The Project Team for the telephone problem had its one day training with Ed Blount. It's first meeting occurred on a day when a snow storm kept Ed from attending. Connie Hathron is to be the inside person and co-facilitator with Ed. Unfortunately, at the last minute he could not attend the first meeting, so I both gave the charge to the committee and facilitated the first meeting. The committee showed the effects of Ed's training. We were able to stay on task or get back on task without feelings being hurt. All participated and some good problem statements were generated. Connie ran the second meeting which he said also went well. Hopefully, the Project Team will be successful in its goal. It is frustrating them to go through the problem solving steps but the need to make decisions based on data is accepted and allays the frustration to a great extent.

I've made contact with Sacramento County Schools. They have a TQM program in place. They already do an annual Quality survey and staff training, both three hour and two day. They will be sending me materials and opening a dialogue. The head of their program wasn't in so I suggested through his secretary that we meet in San Diego at the AASA National Convention, if he is going. We may get a conference call going once I receive their materials.

Ben Lavin from the State Department of Education will be talking to some local area businessmen about helping Akron's TQM movement. He'll be seeking to get them to assign or allow members of their Quality Control Departments to work as advisors to our study groups. He seemed pretty confident about one company. Evidently their headquarters is in Summit County although the plant is in Canton, Stark County. I hope he is successful. I have agreed to serve on a state level committee related to the TQM movement although the committee only exists in Ben's hopes at this time.

Twelve people from community institutions which service youth attended the Deming led workshop, Schools and Communities Cooperating for Quality--Lessons for Leaders. on January 23-24, 1992. The Summit County contingency considered how Deming's concepts could be applied to the Summit County institutions serving youth. The following people were in Arlington, VA for the workshop:

- Norman Czubaj, Superintendent, Summit County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.
- Tim Davis, Summit County Executive
- Sharon Deitzel, Manager, Child Advocacy and Government Relations, Children's Hospital Medical Center

- Alvin Heatley, Executive Assistant, School Improvement, Akron Public Schools
- Robert Labbe, President, Family Services
- Pat McGrath, Executive Director, Summit County Department of Human Services
- Barbara Mathews, Executive Director, Community Partnerships, Akron Public Schools
- John Sarros, Executive Director, UCPSH
- Louis Trenta, Executive Assistant, Division of Accountability, Akron Public Schools
- Paul VanderSchie, Executive Director, County of Summit, Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board
- Charles Vehlow, Director, Akron Child Guidance Center
- Joe White, Executive Director, County of Summit, Children's Service Board

During the activities in this two-day seminar, the participants started to plan how to work together to improve the services to the youth of the community.

One of the earliest and most fascinating discussions within the group took place at lunch the first day. During that discussion we came to recognize that the organizations serving youth in Summit County operated as autonomous systems rather than as a unified system. Deming later called it a "smashed system". We agreed that it would be beneficial to build a unified system. The first question toward that end was, "Whose in charge?" None sought to be the controlling institution but each sought to protect his/her own institution from complete domination. The focus was toward finding a way to bring all the leaders together and generate a consensus or confederation of institutions with a common goal that would incorporate all the institutions. It was expected that by working as a single system rather than autonomous institutions, the quality and level of services for Summit County could be improved.

After the afternoon session, we had dinner together and continued the discussions. Several of us continued until 11:00 PM. During the second day we maintained our focus during the sessions and expressed our observations to the entire workshop. Waiting at the airport for our flights home, we again continued the discussions. We all agreed that we ought to get together and work on changing the relationship between our various institutions. More than once Barbara and I were thanked for bringing the group together and for going outside of APS with the invitations to the seminar.

One of the foundations that had a representative attending expressed an interest in what we were doing. Hopefully, it can translate into some supportive funding.

I gave Lewis Rhodes of AASA a draft copy of our Q&A on Total Quality. He indicated that he might like to put it into the AASA network. I revised it slightly after returning and sent him a copy and permission to duplicate it.

Ben Lavin was at the workshop, also. He told me again that he was going to speak to people about helping Akron.

After I got back, I spent an hour with Dana Cound discussing where we had gone since I talked with him in October. The key points of our discussion include:

> Use of a steering committee composed of three or four highest administrators in the institution is valuable for setting directions, modeling behavior, and teaching/learning the concepts and the processes at the direction setting level of the institution.

Use of TQ Councils at other levels with membership of 8 to 15 people is useful to carry out the direction from the steering committee and to pass along the behaviors desired to other levels within the institution.

Both the steering committee level and the council levels need to engage in active problem solving or quality improvement processes to fully understand them. Hands on experience is vital to successful implementation.

There are benefits to both job alike study groups and to study groups from across several types of business or activities. We concluded that it would probably be beneficial to have a study/problem solving group with the top leadership of the child serving institutions in Summit County. At the same time it would probably be more beneficial for other levels in the schools to engage in study groups with other school people. The idea of a large study group like the Deming study groups in Detroit and Cincinnati but composed of interested school people from Northeast Ohio seemed worthwhile. The small study groups that we have now probably ought to be shifted into problem solving/quality improvement groups over the next year. In a sense they would be mutual support groups learning together by doing together and then become groups of people who are facilitating new groups going into the process.

Dana is teaching a two day course on statistical thinking to GenCorp executives that is having visible results in getting them to use data for decision making. He will be sharing his materials with me and has offered to teach a section for us. It takes 13 to 16 hours and can be spread out or done in two consecutive days. Segments could possibly be as short as two hours, although half day chunks would probably be better for him and us.

I also met with Bob Moyer whom I had met at the Akron-Canton section meeting of the ASQC. We discussed what APS was doing and how he might be able to help. After reviewing our progress we agreed that support for the development of statistical thinking might be the best for us at present. Bob agreed to locate four people to work with our Study Groups and help them to develop an understanding of the basic statistical tools for SPC and to help develop statistical thinking.

My thought is to have Dana Cound do his workshop with the senior staff and use the people Bob and Ben find to work one per Study Group. I hope they develop and long term relationship and ability to interact without fear or intimidation.

The first call back from Bob Moyer's work came in. The caller couldn't give time on a continuing basis, so he agreed to put on a half day workshop on statistical thinking. Dr. Goggins will advertise it as supportive of Deming's concepts and see how many people we can attract.

FEBRUARY 8, 1992

The Martha Holden Jennings Foundation has funded our TQM training activities with a $7,000 grant. The director also contacted the Gund Foundation and arranged an additional $7,000 grant. Nearly all of these grants will go to pay for activities already accomplished--initiated in expectation of such funding, but there should be enough to buy some additional videotapes and a SPC software package with training. The recognition means more than the money, but the money is very much needed in this tight budget year.

Dr. Goggins has arranged for the session on Statistical Tools for Total Quality. There have been some early sign ups already. Bob Moyer has agreed to help my Study Group with statistical thinking and another quality expert from an industry in Canton will be helping another of our study groups.

My three coordinators who are facilitating Deming Study Groups have all remarked about the experience as being a high light for them in their work so far this year. All report active participation by most of their group's members.

I've got to get the Steering Committee started and get a plan in writing. A rough draft of part of the plan is done, but it needs work before I'm willing to share it.

MARCH 2, 1992

Back at the beginning of February I was asked to "stand and deliver" on the profound knowledge concepts of Edwards Deming. Toni Moynihan-McCoy surprised me on the first of three days during which she was presenting the Day One of the Instructional Alignment training. She called for the presentation each day and it was put into the agenda for the training presented by our own people. Each time I presented, my understanding of the importance of the concepts grew. I see where Deming's Fourteen Points are drawn from these concepts; they are practical applications of ideas contained within the Profound Knowledge concepts. Additionally, the presentation allowed me the chance to explain that training, such as the Instructional Alignment course, was one ways to impact a system.

The AASA National Convention was held and Terry Grier had been accepted to make a presentation titled "Leadership through Quality" which was based on his interactions with Xerox Corporation and the training we received from them in August 1991. He invited me to co-present with him, and we prepared an outline together. At the Convention Terry spoke at length about the activities we have underway and related many of them to facets of the Xerox training and Deming's theory of management. I talked about problem solving and quality improvement processes. Over two hundred people were present for the presentation.

During the Convention I attended all but one presentation related to Total Quality by whatever title. I wrote a ten page summary of the key ideas I heard and audio taped the various presentations for sharing with Akron administrators. The key ideas that flowed through most of the presentations were: (1) planning is important, (2) training is vital, (3) and this is a process not a program.

I talked with Bob Moyer about joining my study group to be a resource on statistical thinking. I also asked him about forming a group to review the Board's policies, administrative procedures, and contracts for hindrances to Total Quality processes. He though it could be done but told me that we first had to decide what we meant and believed by Total Quality. I agreed with him.

We had the first meeting of the APS Total Quality Steering Committee. I wrote a summary of the meeting. Grier could not make the meeting which is not a good sign but I briefed him later. Negotiations are eating up a lot of his time.

The draft mission statement for the Total Quality Steering Committee follows:

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Akron Public Schools' Total Quality Steering Committee will direct, support, and participate in the development and administration of a Total Quality (TQ) process. The Steering Committee will ensure that key decisions regarding TQ are made and that the financial and human resources needed are made available.

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. To formulate, communicate, promote, and guide the TQ process.
2. To establish and direct the activities of the APS TQ Councils.
3. To ensure that reward and recognition systems support and reinforce TQ participation and success.
4. To approve quality project proposals to be pursued by Project teams.
5. To monitor and communicate results achieved through the TQ process.
6. To lead the quality planning process.
7. To participate in recognition events that celebrate TQ success.
8. To provide the financial and human resources needed to effectively pursue TQ.
9. To ensure that adequate training is provided in TQ in order to establish an environment of continuous learning.
10. To ensure top management's personal and direct involvement in TQ activities, including membership in a Project team and participation in TQ training.
11. To set TQ goals on an annual basis.

The minutes of the meeting of the Total Quality Steering Committee follow:

Present: Barbara Mathews, Al Heatley, Mike Pockl, Lou Trenta
Absent: Terry Grier

A general overview of where the system was with regard to Total Quality was shared.

Decisions made:

Name of committee: Total Quality Steering Committee.

Name of next level committees: Total Quality Councils.
These Councils could be set up by Divisions, levels, or any other major component of the school system. Decisions on their composition would be made in the future.

Name of problems solving and/or quality improvement groups: Project Teams.

Keep the Steering Committee this size with the future addition of the Executive Assistant for School Improvement, Division A.

Mission statement and responsibilities draft.

Participate in training in statistical thinking by Dana Cound.

Try to develop a Deming study group with the Summit County Youth Serving institutions. Hold off on deciding about forming a large group study program until after the meeting with the Summit County group.

Work to develop the relationship with the Summit County institutions.

Endorsed the idea of developing our own trainers for the Xerox problem solving process.

Dialogue was held about the following:

Providing a 1 to 3 hour initial training in TQ concepts for all employees.

Providing "just-in-time" training in group process and problems solving to Project Teams when they are named.

Means for identifying the problems which ought to be tackled by Project Teams.

The Baldridge Award application as a means to do a quality audit of APS.

Local chapter of ASQC's willingness to review Board policies in the light of our definition of Total Quality. This necessitates our defining our beliefs related to Total Quality before they can help us.

Local chapter of ASQC's members serving as resources people to our small study groups.

[End of minutes]

During this past week most of heads of agencies serving youth in Summit County and who attended the January Deming seminar in Washington met to discuss what to do next. The consensus of the group was to stay within our current group for the time being, to continue to learn about Deming's theories, and to work with our individual mission statements to see if there is a common mission around which we can organize. We are not closing ourselves from future participation by other agencies but want to understand ourselves better before seeking participation by others. There was also the feeling that any newcomers to the group probably ought to go to a Deming seminar before starting in with us, so that they have a common understanding of what we are trying to do. We are meeting in a month to share our mission statements, to try to abstract a common element from those statements, and to view and discuss a tape from the Deming Library.

MARCH 7, 1992

Gene White of Gene White Associates gave a four hour presentation on Total Quality Management. Only fourteen of the thirty-two who signed up attended. Most who did not come were field administrators. Gene gave a number of practical applications and kept the attention of those attending. I think at least some of us are ready for more training and practice in applying the statistical tools.

With negotiations taking up so much of everyone's attention and concern, we were probably lucky to get fourteen people to attend.

MARCH 21, 1992

Bob Moyer of Smithers Scientific Services began working with my Deming study group over the last two weeks. He came to one meeting and just to be introduced and to sit in. During the meeting he introduced the study of practical statistics and showed how we use them already without paying conscious attention to it. During the second meeting he attended, he led us on an exploration of histograms. He even had school based examples. After his presentation we discussed how we might use histograms in our various school settings. The major point made in the discussion was that we could benefit from graphing much of the data that we now collect. For example, we provide data on grade distribution by teacher and class period. It could be more dramatic and have more impact if we showed the data with a histogram and put a histogram representing larger groupings, such as, all the grades given by an instructor, all the grades given in the school, or all the grades given by all instructors for the same subject.

Dana Cound's office has scheduled the seminar on statistical thinking for our senior staff. Dana is so tied up giving the seminar to GenCorp executives that we could not get on his calendar until July, but we do have time then.

I think that the study of statistical thinking, variation, and the use of data is a major need in our progress toward a Total Quality environment. For example, within the last two weeks we had to prepare a plan for utilizing about 8.5 million dollars in levy-dependent money over three years which would be set aside for school improvement. From my perspective, we generated a plan that was based more on judgment, beliefs, and gut feelings than on data, and I say that recognizing that my division is the one which should have been able to provide data upon which to make the decisions. I don't know that the decisions would have been different or better, but I strongly suspect that they would have.

We, as senior staff, have to believe so firmly in getting the data before deciding that we demand the data before we act. The insistence on data by the top decision makers will give it value in the eyes of the rest of the organization while acting without it reinforces the traditional, gut-level decision making processes.

In order to be in a better position to provide data in the future, the Director of Information Management has been working on a five year plan for upgrading the use of technology in both administration and instruction. The first draft costed out at 33 million dollars. The second draft will be around 30 million. If implemented we would still not reach our initial goal of one computer with peripherals for every three students, but it would move us dramatically from a current ratio of 1 to 22+ to about 1 to 4.5+ and it would provide access to all data for all professional staff.

Additionally, I have asked my staff to begin to develop evaluation programs for the major initiatives proposed for the additional money. The programs are to have major formative evaluation components along the lines taught by Joe Wholey of the American Evaluation Association.

Our Total Quality Steering Committee met again. The major accomplishment of the meeting was a draft Quality policy. We are going to think about it and try to improve it before we publicize it but we feel pretty good about it. It reads:

> Quality in the Akron Public Schools means that we will elicit the LEARNING BY ALL which is necessary to satisfy the requirements of our internal and external

customers. Improvement of learning is the job of all Akron Public School employees.

If we can get the Quality policy established as both Board policy as well as an administrative guideline both on paper and in our minds, we will have to look at and treat each other and our community "customers" in a much different way.

Another avenue opened up over that last week, also. Spencer Grieco, the husband of one of our teachers and father of another made contact to discuss a certification program for the ISO 9000 standards. He leads me to believe that it may be possible for the schools to certified under a program being developed in Florida. He recognizes that it costs money but indicated that he could help put together some funding sources including some help from American Gas Laboratories for whom he works as Director of Product Certification. We'll be meeting next week.

APRIL 5, 1992

Jim Bell, principal at one of our middle schools and a member of the study group I facilitate, and I gave a presentation at the North Central Regional Education Laboratory (NCREL) Conference in Chicago. There were about forty people present, and the talk seemed well received. I thought I spent too much time on the background information, although Alvin Heatley was rather emphatic in stating that he thought the background was all necessary to understand why we did what we did and the results those actions had.

I've set up a meeting to discuss forming some sort of Northeast Ohio Deming study group for educators. The meeting will be held at 10:00 AM on April 10, 1992 at the Berea Board of Education building. I expect the superintendents from Elyria, Aurora and Westlake to attend. The Superintendent of Berea cannot attend but two of his administrators including one whom he has assigned half time to implementation of Berea's quality program will be there. The Summit County Superintendent will be out of town then but said he would sent a representative. Elyria will also have two or three people there. I intend to take one of our principals and one of our study group facilitator.

I talked to Charles Melvin from Beloit, WI about the draft standards related to ISO 9000 standards. He is one of the reviewers. He said what Spence Grieco and I talked about sounded good and that if we followed through, we'd probably be one of the first, if not the first, school districts with a certified quality program.

I talked to Craig Johnson of the Department of Educational Research at Florida State University, chairman of the ASQC group rewriting the ASQC/ANSI guidelines for quality management systems into language for educators. He told me that if we pursued setting up a quality management system and got it certified, we might be the first in the United States. He knows of one school in England although there may be more. He is working with seven districts in Florida toward that end although none seem committed to getting certified as yet.

Some problems he has uncovered and which we ought to be aware of include:

(1) the need for a document control system. Business is so accustomed to having it that the need does not show up in most of the literature on quality management.

(2) the need to have a quality system in which variability is under control. This is difficult in education. In England they resolved it by asking each department to tell what the department's quality control system was.

(3) the need for quality manuals which flow chart the processes that affect quality. In essence we would need a script for who does what when. Then we need to write the procedures and instructions into the manual.

He recommended that we read Frank Caplan's book, The Quality System and the ASQC's Quality-Progress' back issue on understanding variation. Then we ought to read Walter Shewhart's book, Economic Control of Quality of Manufactured Product. He emphasized that the glossary contained in the recent issue of Quality-Progress is very important since the definitions are not negotiable.

In summary, he said it would be tough but he urged and encouraged us to go for it if we are going to get the kind of support Spencer Grieco of AGA implied. He said he would be willing to talk with us or help us any way he could. He offered to come up or for us to come down and talk with him there. It may be a good idea to have at least a conference call with him after hearing AGA's presentation.

I met with the Summit County Youth Services' Deming Study Group this morning. Only five of us showed up. We agreed to continue studying Deming and at the same time try to apply his theory on a problem. We decided to start with transportation. We believe there is considerable overlap in the various transportation systems in Summit County and there ought to be none. Tim Davis will call the next meeting at which we will determine what our data needs are in order to understand the problem--what do we need to know in order to deal with the problem? After we determine the data needs, we will involve those necessary to gather the data. I'm trying to take the group through the Xerox problem solving process as a means to try out Deming's theory of management. Davis will be inviting the CEO of the Metro Regional Transit Authority and the County Schools Superiintendent to the meeting.

APRIL 17, 1992

The Deming Study Group that I facilitate has met twice since I last wrote in this journal. Bob Moyer talked about the attendance data which we had shared for the schools served by the group's participants. He helped us look at the data in several ways I had not thought of before. I had been enamoured of control charts and was pushing for putting the data into that format. Bob used histograms to get us to raise questions other than is the system stable enough to support prediction. The presentation centered on distinguishing between the two main types of variation--attribute and variable--and sample sizes. We discussed how to apply the variable one to our work sites. We agreed to bring data about tardiness to the next meeting.

I met with Dr. Goggins' study group for a presentation on the uses of statistics in making decisions and solving problems. The information was similar to what Bob Moyer has been developing. Dr. Goggins has gotten two people from Goodyear's quality management department involved with her group. When I challenged the group to apply what they have been learning to a real problem, they accepted the challenge and listened to the advice of Don Butto, one of the Goodyear people. They invited him to work with them as a facilitator. It looks like a promising group.

My own group met for a second time but only two people showed up. It was a combination of Monday in the short week before break, unanticipated problems in the building, and

knowing that Moyer would not be able to attend due to an out of town commitment. Nonetheless, it was worthwhile. The two principals and I talked with the visitor from the Jennings Foundation about our activities related to Total Quality Management.

The meeting of people interested in forming a Northeast Ohio Deming study group was held. The superintendent and/or representatives were there from Berea, Westlake, Elyria, Aurora, and Akron. We agreed that there was benefit to be gained by forming such a group and set about planning an initial meeting and invitation. We named ourselves the Quality Education Transformation Network and defined our mission as "To provide for interactive and collaborative action to bring about the transformation to quality education." We targeted as participants people in leadership positions in school systems who have already made some commitment to Deming's theory of management. We sketched out a meeting agenda and assigned tasks to those in attendance looking toward a follow-up meeting on May 2, 1992 and a three hour first session sometime before school is out this spring. We included in our definition of leadership not only key administrators but key union officials and key business leaders who are participating in a school district's efforts to transform the district. The tentative topic for the first session is to be a discussion and sharing of problems associated with "Training everyone in the district." We are looking at a key presenter who can discuss alternatives and two or three reactors from districts in the process already.

The presentation by the AGA representatives has been scheduled for the early afternoon of May 4, 1992, before the Executive Session of the Board meeting scheduled for that day. Hopefully two or three Board members will attend. We need Board members to better understand the total quality leadership/management program we are establishing in the system.

The full membership of the Total Quality Steering Committee met this week. I reviewed the activities related to Total Quality since the last meeting. We reviewed our Mission Statement. We took as our major task of the meeting to establish the problem solving/quality improvement process to be followed in the Akron Public Schools. We reviewed Xerox's (Alvin Heatley and Mike Pockl had just completed their training in Xerox's processes), the quality flow charts from GenCorp and Goodyear, and The Team Handbook by Peter Scholtes.

We established an eight step process for APS:

1. Analyze the current situation

   Analyze data not opinions. Analyze primarily from the view of the District's mission statement but remain open to analysis related to Akron 2000, "customer" relationships, Deming's Fourteen Points and Profound Knowledge, effective schools research, and instructional alignment processes. Use the seven statistical tools.

2. Define the problem.

3. Observe the problem.

   Basically answer the question, "What do we need to know to be certain the problem exists; and if it exists, its causes?" Again, data, not opinion, must be obtained.

4. Analyze the causes using the seven statistical tools as applicable.

5. Develop an plan that addresses the causes of the problem.

6. Implement the plan on a trial basis.

7. Evaluate the results of the trial implementation.

8. Act on the results.

We further decided to form a Total Quality Council of principals and another of central office administrators. From these two councils and the Learning Specialists whom we will want to train people in the process, we are to select some people to put together a manual for the APS Quality Processes.

APRIL 25, 1992

I drafted out a spreadsheet journal format for the problem solving process before spring break. During break I read something that leads me to think we ought to change it to something like "Opportunity for Improvement" rather than "problem solving".

Ben Lavin convened a meeting in Reynoldsberg consisting of representatives from schools around the state which are using or trying to introduce TQM concepts. He also had a number of business representatives who have been active in helping local districts with the Quality concepts and training. There must have been 20 to 25 people there. We spent most of the two hour meeting sharing what has been going on in our districts. Les Schultz of Elyria was drafted by Ben to chair the group. The rest of us were asked to consider serving on one of four sub committees laid out by Ben in his letter. We have agreed to meet again on the first Thursday in June.

MAY 3, 1992

The TQ Steering Committee met Friday even though only three of us could attend, Terry Grier, Mike Pockl, and me, and we had to keep it short due to a rush request for draft responses to a GAP questionnaire.

We revisited the issue of establishing Total Quality Councils at the present time. Our consensus was that it might be too early in the process for their establishment. We will proceed with the establishment of an ad hoc group to "cut and paste" and/or write a training/explanatory manual for the APS problem solving process.

We also revisited the seven step process and agreed to rename it as: APS OPPORTUNITY FOR IMPROVEMENT process. The sample story sheet and two of the steps were revised to reflect a positive concept, opportunity for improvement, rather than the negative connotations related to problem solving. Additionally, this will allow the process to more readily blend with the work of school improvement related to Building Leadership Teams and the Effective School research.

We discussed use of the remaining $3,000 of grant money and decided to use it toward educating our administrative staff about risk taking, learning styles, motivational styles, and management styles--those presently held and those desired in the paradigm to which we are seeking to transform the Akron schools.

Saturday morning Grier, Goggins, and I went to Berea for the meeting with the Quality Education Transformation Network. Grier was the only new person present.

We discussed the proposed program and through discussion switched it from a presentation by a third party to a panel dialogue on the training programs being implemented by Elyria, Westlake, and Akron. Terry, Beverly, and Leonard will present and discuss, possibly in a fishbowl type setting.

Through a lot of discussion engendered in part due to the need to bring Terry up to date and to give him a chance to air his thoughts, we revisited the focus of the group--those already striving to implement Total Quality concepts in their districts--and most of the arrangements yet made. Terry made us think through longer range implications of the group than we had at our last meeting.

As a result of the discussions we changed the proposed name of the group to Quality Support Group, decided to charge $25 for registration for the conference; set June 27, 1992 as the date for the conference, set Independence High School as the site (provided they'll have us); made assignments for "marketing" the conference, obtaining a logo, registration, refreshments. and coordination of activities; and set our next meeting date.

If the conference is successful and brings in more money than expenses, we plan to use the "profit" to guarantee the expenses of a speaker for the next conference. We have no idea how many people will be interested in coming. We do know that we have found the chance to dialogue and share with each other a valuable activity and expect that others would also. I guess this is a pilot implementation. With a survey for those who attend we ought to have a better idea of what type of support group is needed. For me, the attraction is the opportunity to share experiences and perhaps help others or myself to avoid a mistake made elsewhere.

After the meeting, Terry and I talked briefly with Jack Marsick about doing some training in Akron to help the administrators understand the paradigm shift being sought. Later reflection on my part leads me to wonder if maybe Vic Cottrill's Venture for Excellence package might be more useful.

MAY 16, 1992

A group of four men from the American Gas Association Laboratories made a presentation to Terry Grier, Brian Williams, and me about the process for obtaining ISO 9000 certification for quality improvement programs. They indicated a willingness to work with Akron as a certifying agent. We viewed this as a means to provide meaningful structure to our accountability division and program as well as public verification of its quality. Terry committed to participating in the process and instructed me to start the pre-assessment phase with Chuck Russo from AGA. We will be meeting May 20. Since I will be leaving the district shortly, Ellen Goggins and Brian Williams will participate in the meeting so there can be some bridging with my successor.

Bob Moyer from Smithers Scientific has agreed to advise us as part of our effort to obtain the ISO 9000 certification. We need one or more consultants to help us develop responses to gaps that will be found by AGA between our practices and the ISO 9000 standards. Bob is working to have Smithers certified as a certifying agent for the standards, so we have a highly qualified advisor in him. I have two more appointments set up to get some additional advisors. Since we are asking these men or their companies to donate their services, I don't want to put excessive demands on any one of them.

During this past week we made our first use of control charts. We had a list of students for whom we needed a waiver from the state's testing requirements. Ellen entered the data by

school and reason for each student and then ran a control chart. This was the first use, other than practice, of our new software package for statistical control tools. It clearly showed three high schools which needed to be checked for special causes related to truancy during the testing window and one middle school and two elementary schools for non valid tests. The charts made it very clear there was a need to look into these buildings for special causes.

The heads of the three school improvement divisions met with Jack Marsick to discuss his research and the potential benefits from a one day inservice to explain the results and to personalize the concepts for the administrators in the divisions. It looks like we will use his services although each division may fit it into their inservice plans in a different way. I think the end results of the inservice will be a deeper understanding of the Deming's four aspects of profound knowledge and the intents of the change activities initiated by Grier and other senior staff members. Hopefully improvement comprehension will enable the administrators to cope better and perhaps even to cooperate more in institutionalizing the changes.

I have shared the APS - Opportunity for Improvement storyboard with about ten people including a principal and several people outside the system. I've made minor changes but overall the feedback has been positive. Next week it goes to senior staff. The real test will be getting them to model its use. If they won't commit to using it, the storyboard will go nowhere.

JUNE 10, 1992

The last month has been hectic. I signed a contract to head the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Cleveland and processed my resignation for retirement from the Akron Schools. Winding down my involvement with Akron at the same time as trying to set an environment for the continuation of the Total Quality concepts has been the main thrust of my activities. The Superintendent has expressed his concern over maintaining the TQM activity and the need for a knowledgeable person in my role or in support of my role. Unfortunately, our levy request was rejected by the voters and money will be very tight since we have to cut nearly four million dollars to balance the budget.

The storyboard has been sent out to all the principals, all the study group members, and to those who have shown an interest. People have been complimentary in their comments but evidence of use must wait. Terry asked me to use the Opportunity for Improvement process on the Teacher of the Year recognition program. Since I only had two weeks remaining, it was not possible to use the entire process. It was helpful, though, in getting the committee members to obtain data which could verify what they perceived to be the "opportunities". Turns out that their perceptions were not supported by data and that the obtained data suggested "opportunities" in other areas. Some possible improvements were recommended based on the data obtained. Due to the brevity of available time, the suggested improvements could not be checked out and several suggestions not supported by data (no data available related to them) were passed along. More time might have led to questioning the need or validity of the additional suggestions. From my view they represented personal opinions of one or two committee members which the other members were unwilling to challenge or demand supportive data. I believe the Opportunity for Improvement process would work; I'm very concerned that training in the use of it will be haphazard and the process be cast aside because it is too difficult, too time consuming, too much in the way, or too . . . (any of a hundred excuses).

The state level TQM resource committee (Ben Lavin calls it the ODE TQM Resource Group) met again. We spent nearly three hours arriving at a "pencil" mission statement for the group. We used the Quality Support Group's mission statement as a starting point. Two subcommittees were formed; one is to review the mission statement in light of all the brainstorming about functions of the group and the other is to make recommendations for a sub-committee structure. I volunteered for the sub-committee on sub-committees although as we met briefly after the meeting I will not be available when the rest of the members are able to do the work. I have to call my ideas in to Don Botto who has assumed de facto leadership of the sub-committee. He has good ideas and a good presentation of them. Hopefully, I'll be able to participate in the conference call.

The meeting with Chuck Russo and Darryl Parker of AGA went well. Everybody is new at this idea of certifying a school system and somewhat tentative. Of course, we had not yet gotten our consultants lined up and AGA was still trying to get a handle on how a school system operated. We agreed that the next two major steps are (1) to provide AGA with a summary of the work of each of the Divisions and independent Departments and (2) set up a joint meeting of the AGA, our consultants, and our key people. Since I am leaving this latter meeting will have to wait for my successor.

Terry and I spent about an hour and a half talking with Dana Cound of GenCorp about Quality development and Quality processes. Dana has agreed to join Robert Moyer and Don Botto as consultants to APS in the ISO-9000 certification process. We all agreed that the next major step is for the three consultants and the representatives of AGA need to meet with Terry and the other key players in APS.

The Quality Support Group's presentation/discussion on training set for June 27, 1992 has to be a "go" now. The brochures were sent out. As one might expect, opportunities for improvement exist in the process for preparing the brochure, which was my task. A word in the lead sentence was misspelled despite being reviewed by at least five people; corrective action, use spell check just before final print out no matter who has reviewed the document. The title of one of the participants was not correct; corrective action, fax draft copies to participants before final print out.

I hope the program goes well. The final planning meeting was held on the site of the June 27 meeting, but Terry and I could not attend due to a Board meeting held to introduce the tentative plan of budget cuts. Also Jim Costanzo had a son graduating in Boston and could not attend. Ellen went on Akron's behalf and reported back to Terry and me. It looks good.

I spent about four hours on my last day briefing my successor as head of Accountability on where we were and where we were going. I prepared by sketching out the topics on the dry ink boards in my office. It was the first time since I took over in August of 1991 that I had really taken a global look at where the Division stood. In August it was all aspirations. In June there was an awful lot accomplished when compared to August. Even the aspirations had grown in depth and detail. Looking back I can see that we have come a long way; looking ahead I can see that APS has a long way to go but is on the road and can do it.